

PATRICIA M. DRONEY, J.D., PSY.D.  
75 ROCKLEDGE DRIVE  
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107  
860.521.4277

March 27, 2012

**OPPOSITION TO CT S.B. 452 "AN ACT CONCERNING TREATMENT AND  
CARE OF PERSONS WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES"**

**CT S.B. 452 Violates The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the  
Decision of the United States Supreme Court in Olmstead v. L.C.**

As a Family Member of National Alliance on Mental Illness – CT and a member of its Public Policy Committee, I speak in opposition to S.B.452 as presenting a possible violation of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Olmstead v. L.C. (1999).

The State of CT and its departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health and Social Services are currently defending a legal action brought in the United States District Court in Hartford by a number of persons with psychiatric disabilities alleging that CT is in violation of the ADA and the Olmstead decision (State of CT Office of Protection and Advocacy et.al. v. The State of CT et.al., Civil Case No. 3:06CV00179 (AWT) by not affording housing and mental health services in the most integrated setting.

As recently as 2009, a decision in the United States District Court Eastern District of New York (Disability Advocates, Inc. and the United States of America (Federal Department of Justice) v. Cuomo, Case 1:03-cv-03209-NGG-MDG) confirmed the definition of the ADA's Integration Mandate as meaning a setting in which persons with psychiatric disabilities could interact with normal persons.

**This decision from the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York is currently on appeal to the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals. It is my understanding that favorable decision on appeal would bear weight on a disposition of the lawsuit brought in the United States District Court in Hartford.**

**THE SOLUTION TO RECOVERY: PATHWAYS TO HOUSING**

The Pathways to Housing Model is simple: provide housing first, then combine that housing with supportive treatment services in the areas of mental and physical health, substance abuse, education and employment.

Since its founding some twenty years ago in New York City, Pathways has housed nearly 2,000 people and had enormous success in keeping them housed. Over the

past 19 years housing retention rates have remained at 85-90%, even among persons who have not succeeded in other programs.

Because the effectiveness of the Housing First model challenged the status quo of the prevailing "mandatory treatment and sobriety before housing" model, Housing First has drawn great interest, careful attention, and scrutiny from government agencies and social service researchers. In 2007, after a critical peer review of all studies on its model, Pathways' Housing First qualified for listing on the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) prestigious National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs.

The model has proven to be incredibly cost effective. Research shows that the cost of providing a home and support services to someone who is homeless and mentally ill is significantly less than the expense of cycling in and out of emergency rooms, shelters, psychiatric hospitals and jails, as would be the result of current S.B. 452. As noted in its Annual Report 2011, Pathways to Housing provides the dignity of a home and so much more at a fraction of the cost of the alternatives.

If any of our esteemed legislators are interested in further information on the Pathways to Housing model, please contact me.